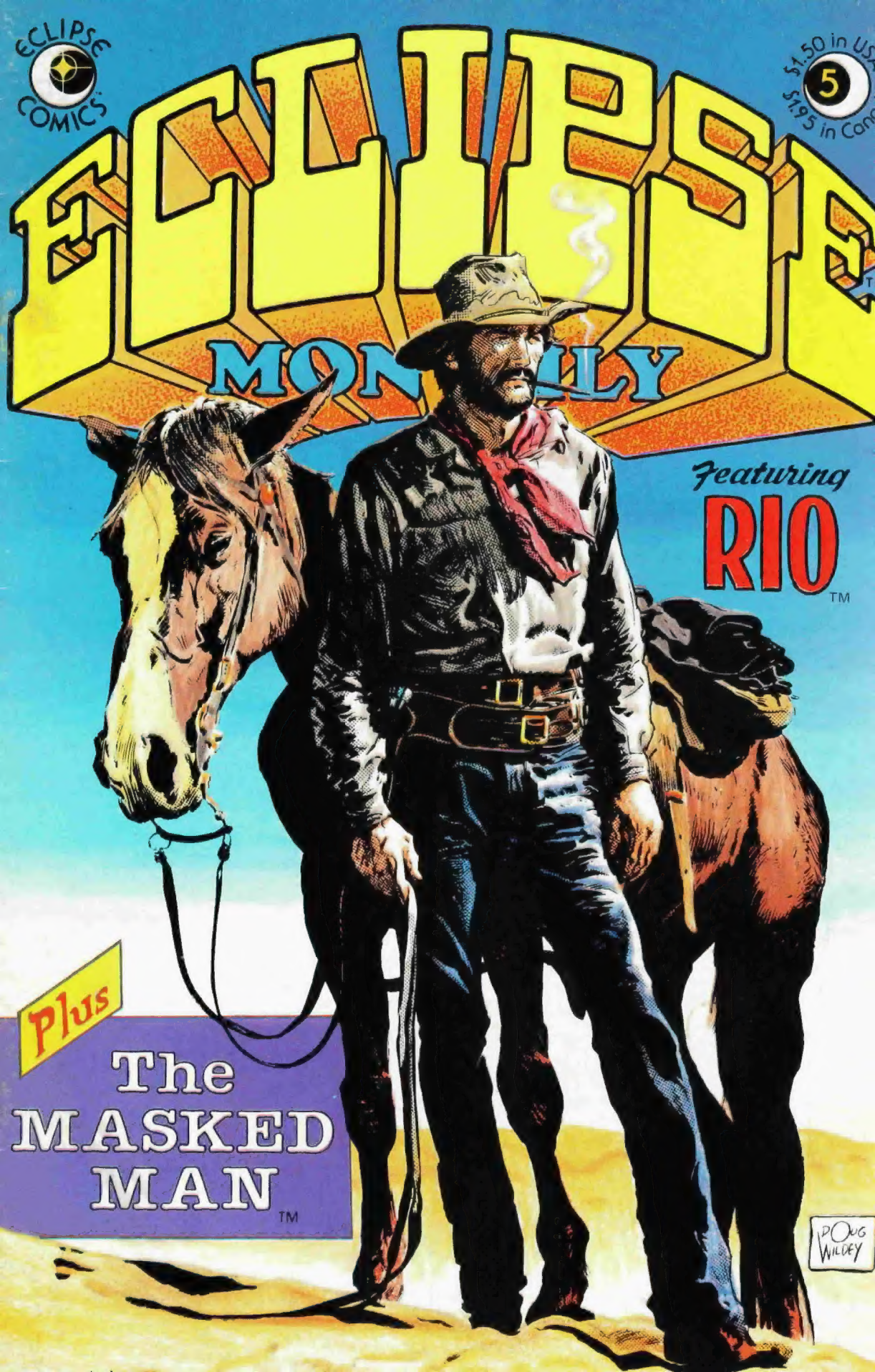
ECLIPSE COMICS
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ECLIPSE
MONTHLY
Featuring
RIO
TM
Plus
The MASKED MAN
TM
DOUG WILDEY

LETTERS TO SURF CITY

Please send your letters to: ECLIPSE COMICS, P. O. Box 199, Guerneville, California 95446

Dear Dean and cat,

For me, this was the best (color) Eclipse yet, no. 3; even without Rio. Thanks! This is decidedly the most eclectic series published today.

My vote's backing Cap'n Q's own bi-monthly — and backing your decision to cut back to $1.50 size, and to parade The Masked Man as your mainstay. That Ragamuffins and Rio will be mainstay alternates makes me happy, too.

My hope's that The Masked Man is set last, the alternates centered and the "variety" given the no. 1 opening spot — because as good as the "variety" will be, Rio/Rags is the cake, and The Masked Man the frosting, and I like saving the frosting for last.

No. 3's Foozle was as merry and bright as this (December) season's meant to be; especially liked the politician-faced rodent people (and the awesome robot rodent!!) and Cap'n Q's shoe-flight. (Is the talking cat Raul?)

I never like Steve Ditko and always read his stories because I always like Steve Ditko. *(Huh? — ed.)* Static is great Ditko, the only political writer other than Moore and Sim. Real thinking going on in real (human) discussions. I miss Ditko's Killjoy, actually.

Ragamuffins — jeez, whatta joy. Gene Colan's entertained me from Doc and Duck and Drac to date, and this particular story is as horrid a horror as Steves Perry's and Bissette's Bizarre Adventure story, "A Frog is a Frog." This is real human horror: casual, unthinking ... unfeeling, and depicted with compassion and honor.

The Masked Man remains excellent. Pages like no. 8 (Barney and Dan's eye-ball exchange) mark why.

Thanks again. Share and enjoy!

Matthew-Louis M. Levin
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Gee, Matthew-Louis, what can I say to someone who likes ALL of the stories, except that I'm happy that you enjoy what we're putting into Eclipse Monthly. I certainly agree with you about the horror inherent in such a casual, uncaring act as Little Bobby Mackelroy's attempt to drown that poor cat. It's more real to me, at least, than giant bugs crawling out of someone's chest and eating them alive. And being more real, that horror affected me deeper. Not everyone read that Ragamuffins story in the same way, however. Witness . . .

Dear Editor,

"Kittycats and Boogeymen" (Eclipse Monthly no. 3) was singularly the most peverse piece of literature that it's ever been my misfortune to read in a comic book.

As a devoted animal lover, I was sickened by the realization that so many talented people could conceive of such a depraved story, let alone carry it to fruition.

Comics are a very impressionable medium. Even though you recognize no comics code, you have an obligation to good taste and decency. An apology to your readers is definitely in order.

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset St.
Scranton, PA 18509

None of us intended to offend you, Jeffrey, and if that story did, we're sorry. I think, however, that you misread Don McGregor's tale. Just because Little Bobby Mackelroy thinks throwing a cat into water is fun, it doesn't mean that we condone or encourage his actions. For example, in a previous Ragamuffins story, this nasty little kid tied a schoolmate to a tree and wanted to (for fun!) pretend to burn her at the stake! There are Little Bobby Mackelroys in this world, and as you say, comics are a very "impressionable" medium. Have you considered that if we show such "bad" behavior in a negative light, it could discourage any potential Little Bobbys in the readership? Yours was the only letter to interpret this story as being anti-animal, Jeffrey, and I think perhaps your obvious great love of animals made you see red when the offending action was portrayed as an incorrect action. We're all animal lovers around here, and in fact both Mullaney brothers are strict vegetarians as an outgrowth of their beliefs.

Folks,

I'm hoping this card will be among a veritable deluge of mail demanding that Doug Wildey's Rio be given its own title. To be honest, it's the best thing yet from Eclipse (at least in my opinion). As to frequency, I don't really care — monthly, quarterly, three times a year. Hell, an annual graphic novel would be fine with me! Whatever schedule is most conducive to Wildey's creative needs. He is one of the great American cartoonists of Western Americana.

John Garcia
(no address given)

Dear cat and Dean,

I just picked up Eclipse Monthly no. 3 and I've already read it twice. This is great stuff, and it's not even particularly violent, which seems to be a prerequisite nowadays for comics. You were smart enough to lasso my favorite artist, Marshall Rogers, so i would've bought the book anyway, but all the series are a pleasure.

Of course I like Cap'n Quick and a Foozle the bestest of all. I'm delighted that Marshall the Writer is just as good and fun as Marshall the Artist. I read this series with a smile on my face the whole time. I especially enjoyed when the good Cap'n's shoes kicked into high gear. The panel layout helped with the feel of insane speeds.

The Masked Man may take a while, but it grows on ya, doesn't it? I could barely stand to look at it when it first appeared, but now that I've become accustomed to its unusual style, I enjoy it almost as much as Cap'n Quick It's funny, warm and touching without getting smarmy and gooey. I'm glad it will continue. Since Marshall will be leaving the book soon, I'll need a reason to keep it on my list, and The Masked Maniis that reason.

John K.Austin
S. 604 Jefferson, no. 6
Spokane, WA 99204

Thanks for your kind words, John, and I'm sorry we had to cut your much longer letter for space reasons.

ECLIPSE MONTHLY (ISSN 0737-6189) Vol. 1, No. 5, February 1984. Published by Eclipse Enterprises, 81 Delaware Street, Staten Island, NY 10304. Dean Mullaney and catherine yronwode, Editors. The Masked Man TM and copyright 1984 B. C. Boyer. Rio TM and copyright 1984 Doug Wildey. All other material copyright 1984 Eclipse Enterprises. All rights reserved. The Eclipse Monthly logo and Eclipse Comics colophon are TM Eclipse Enterprises. Price $1.50 per copy. No similarity between any of the characters, persons or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person, or institution, is intended and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

NAME'S BARNEY McALLISTER. I'M A REPORTER. I COVER REMARKABLE PHENOMENA.

MY FRIEND'S NAME IS DICK CARSTAIRS. HE'S A DETECTIVE. HE'S ALSO THE MASKED MAN. HE FIGHTS CRIME.

WITH US IS DAN DREKSTON. HE'S A REPORTER, TOO. HE'S TRYING TO TAKE OVER MY PLACE AS DICK'S FAITHFUL COMPANION.

MM1007
FROM THE WRITINGS OF BARNEY McALLISTER:

The MASKED MAN™

BY B.C.BOYER

THE INCREDIBLE SEVEN

THE HOT LEAD · *INKERS*
McFARLING & DeWALT · *COLORS*
L.LOIS BUHALIS · *LETTERER*
CAT ⊕YRONWODE · *EDITOR*

BORING. THAT'S WHAT I'D CALL IT.

I TOLD YOU, DREKSTON... NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF SUPERHEROHOOD IS WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN.

I'M GOING TO GET A HAMBURGER. ANY OF YOU GUYS WANT SOME?

NOPE. I'M NOT HUNGRY.

DITTO.

AS DICK WALKED AWAY, DREKSTON AND I FOUND OURSELVES WATCHING HIM. I COULDN'T HELP WONDERING EXACTLY WHAT IT IS ABOUT THE MAN THAT MAKES HIM SUCH A ***HERO***... WHAT ELEMENT... WHAT PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL COMPONENT...

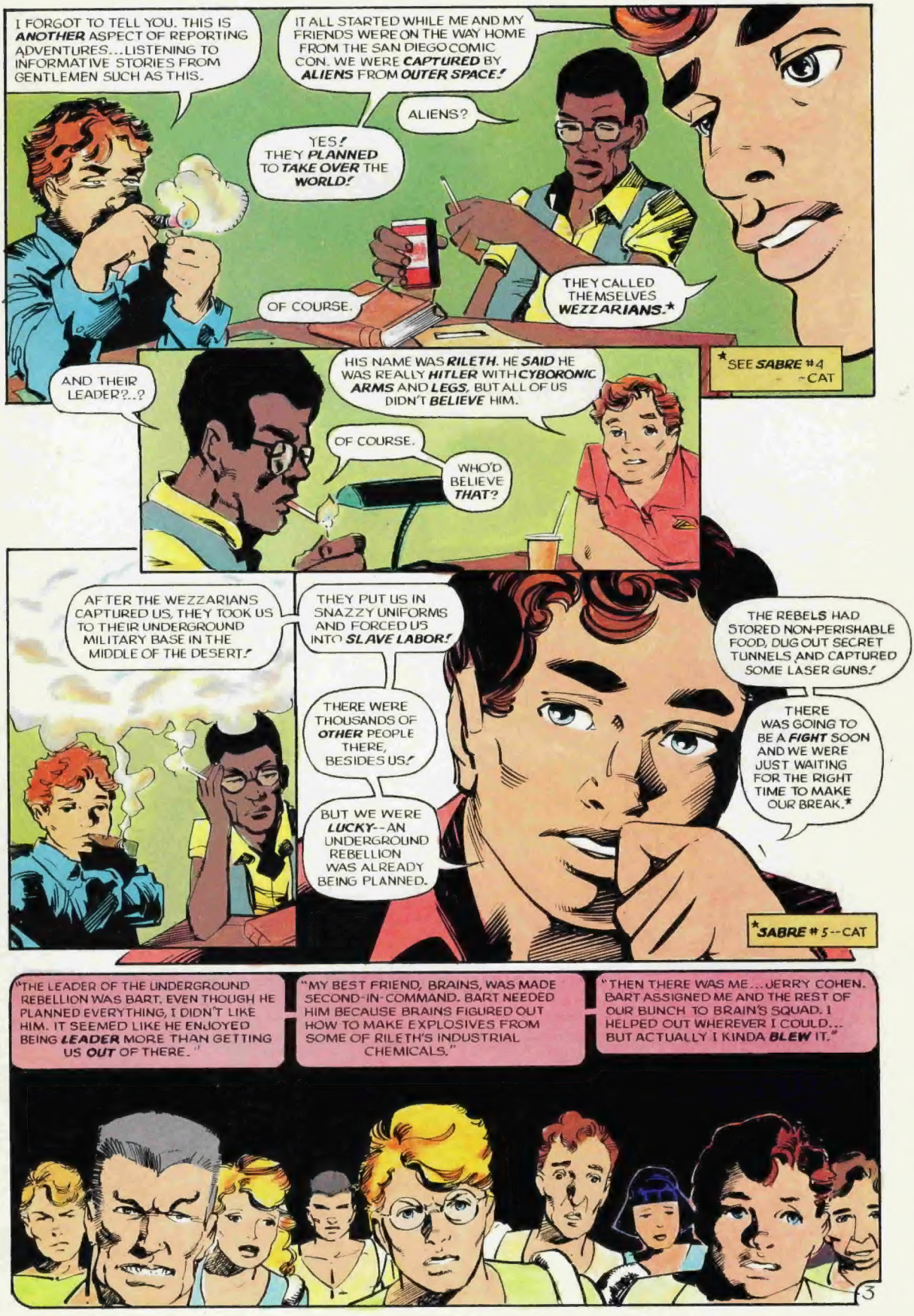
IT ***MUST*** BE MORE THAN JUST RUSHING INTO BURNING BUILDINGS... SAVING LIVES... BUSTING CRIMINALS...

...MORE THAN FIGHTING FOR WHAT'S RIGHT.

AND YET... HOWEVER CLOSE THAT INTANGIBLE FACTOR WAS... IT STILL ELUDED MY GRASP.

UH... PARDON ME...

DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND Mr. BARNEY McALLISTER?
RIGHT HERE, SON. WHAT'S UP?
OH, WOW! YOU'RE THE Mr. McALLISTER?! GREAT!!
I'VE READ ALL YOUR ARTICLES ABOUT THE MASKED MAN. THEY'RE JUST GREAT!!!!
IF I EVER GET TO MEET HIM IN PERSON, I'LL BE BUZZED FOR SURE. HE'S MY HERO, YOU KNOW! MY HERO!
YOU JUST MISSED HIM, KID. HE WENT OUT TO GRAB A BURGER.
AW, C'MON, MISTER. YOU'RE PULLING MY LEG. SUPERHEROS DON'T EAT HAMBURGERS!
BESIDES... IF I JUST MISSED HIM, I'D KILL MYSELF! HE'S MY...
HERO. YES. I KNOW.
LISTEN, Mr. McALLISTER, SINCE YOU WRITE ALL THOSE STORIES ABOUT HIM, I FIGURED I COULD COME TO YOU.
I'VE HAD ONE HECK OF AN ADVENTURE YOU JUST WON'T BELIEVE.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'VE GOT TO TELL THE STORY TO SOMEONE... AND YOU'RE JUST THE RIGHT PERSON.
UH... EXCUSE ME...
HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
GONNA GRAB A BURGER. I'M STARVING.
Oh, NO YOU DON'T. YOU'RE STAYING HERE WITH ME.


I FORGOT TO TELL YOU. THIS IS ANOTHER ASPECT OF REPORTING ADVENTURES...LISTENING TO INFORMATIVE STORIES FROM GENTLEMEN SUCH AS THIS.
IT ALL STARTED WHILE ME AND MY FRIENDS WERE ON THE WAY HOME FROM THE SAN DIEGO COMIC CON. WE WERE CAPTURED BY ALIENS FROM OUTER SPACE!
ALIENS?
YES! THEY PLANNED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD!
OF COURSE.
THEY CALLED THEMSELVES WEZZARIANS.*
*SEE SABRE #4 --CAT
AND THEIR LEADER?..?
HIS NAME WAS RILETH. HE SAID HE WAS REALLY HITLER WITH CYBORONIC ARMS AND LEGS. BUT ALL OF US DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM.
OF COURSE.
WHO'D BELIEVE THAT?
AFTER THE WEZZARIANS CAPTURED US, THEY TOOK US TO THEIR UNDERGROUND MILITARY BASE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT.
THEY PUT US IN SNAZZY UNIFORMS AND FORCED US INTO SLAVE LABOR!
THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE THERE, BESIDES US.
BUT WE WERE LUCKY--AN UNDERGROUND REBELLION WAS ALREADY BEING PLANNED.
THE REBELS HAD STORED NON-PERISHABLE FOOD, DUG OUT SECRET TUNNELS AND CAPTURED SOME LASER GUNS.
THERE WAS GOING TO BE A FIGHT SOON AND WE WERE JUST WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO MAKE OUR BREAK.*
*SABRE #5--CAT
"THE LEADER OF THE UNDERGROUND REBELLION WAS BART. EVEN THOUGH HE PLANNED EVERYTHING, I DIDN'T LIKE HIM. IT SEEMED LIKE HE ENJOYED BEING LEADER MORE THAN GETTING US OUT OF THERE."
"MY BEST FRIEND, BRAINS, WAS MADE SECOND-IN-COMMAND. BART NEEDED HIM BECAUSE BRAINS FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE EXPLOSIVES FROM SOME OF RILETH'S INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS."
"THEN THERE WAS ME...JERRY COHEN. BART ASSIGNED ME AND THE REST OF OUR BUNCH TO BRAIN'S SQUAD. I HELPED OUT WHEREVER I COULD... BUT ACTUALLY I KINDA BLEW IT."

"...THE REBELLION WAS JUST ABOUT TO ***START!*** WE WERE IN ONE OF THE SECRET TUNNELS WHEN IT HAPPENED..."

"IT SEEMED I HAD...UH...ACCIDENTALLY FALLEN IN LOVE WITH A WEZZARIAN SPY. HER NAME WAS...CARLA."

"SHE USED ME TO GET INTO OUR SECRET MEETING."

"WHEN SHE SAW WHAT WE WERE PLANNING, SHE TURNED ON US AND CONFISCATED THE LASERS WE'D STOLEN."

ALRIGHT! ***ALL*** OF YOU...HOLD IT ***RIGHT THERE!***

"BOY, WAS I ***MAD!*** I CHARGED HER WITH EVERYTHING I HAD." *

*SABRE #6--CAT

"LUCKILY, BRAINS HAD CONVERTED A COUPLE OF RILETH'S ROBOTS TO ***OUR*** SIDE..."

OOOFFF!

...OTHERWISE I'D BE DEAD."

LET GO!

AFTER THAT, THE ***REVOLT*** BEGAN.

SO WHY TELL ***ME***, KID? WHY DON'T YOU GO TO THE POLICE?

I ALREADY TRIED.

THEY DIDN'T ***BELIEVE*** ME.

THEY DIDN'T ***BELIEVE*** HIM. HEH!

BUT ***YOU***, Mr. McALLISTER... ***YOU*** WRITE STORIES ABOUT THE ***MASKED MAN***. I FIGURED I COULD TELL ***YOU***.

GO ON.

SO THERE WE WERE.

FIGHTING OUR WAY TO FREEDOM...

FIGHTING FOR...

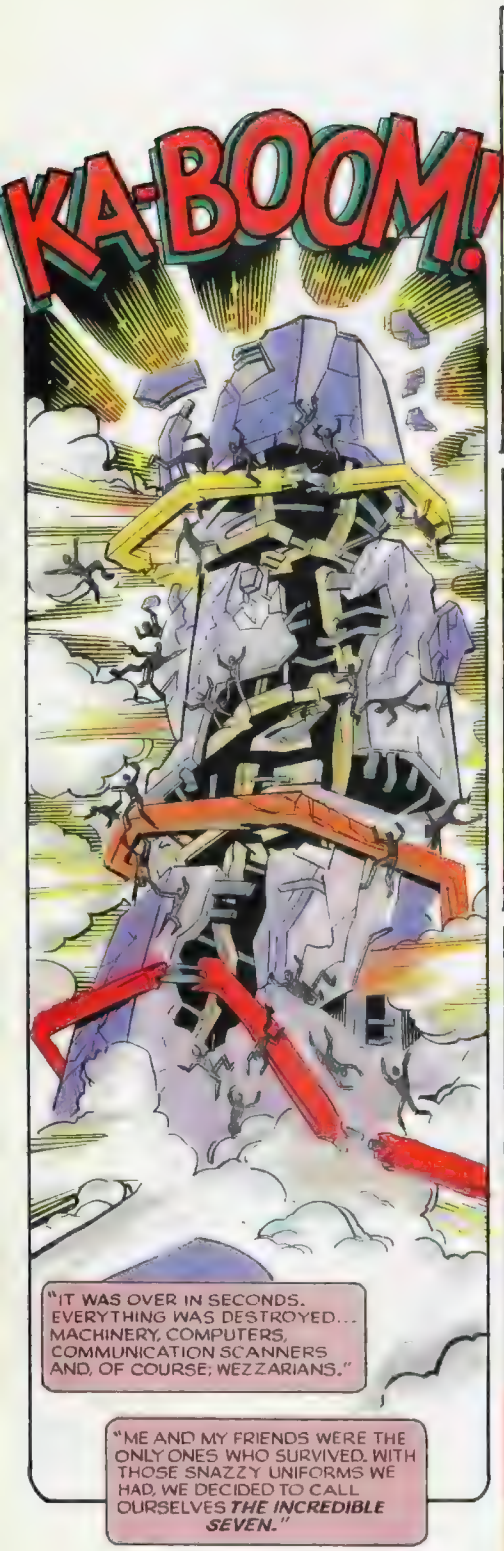
OUR LIVES.

"WE'D SPLIT OUR FORCES INTO THREE GROUPS. THE FIRST WENT FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVERN AND THE SECOND ATTACKED RILETH'S COMMUNICATION CENTER. THE THIRD--AND LARGEST--GROUP WENT FOR THE RING TOWER, CENTER OF WEZZARIAN COMMAND. RILETH WASN'T THERE. WE TOOK THE TOWER..."
"...BUT RILETH'S ARMY WIPED OUT THE TWO SMALLER REBEL GROUPS. WE HAD TAKEN THE TOWER ALRIGHT, BUT WE WERE SURROUNDED."
WE'D LOST A LOT OF PEOPLE. RILETH WAS MASSING HIS TROOPS FOR ATTACK. THAT'S WHEN BART DECIDED ON WHAT HE CALLED OUR "LAST STAND."
BRAINS WAS OPPOSED TO BART'S IDEA. HE HAD WHAT HE CALLED A "STRATEGIC PLAN." AS USUAL, BART WOULDN'T LISTEN TO HIM.
"BART ORDERED TWENTY-FIVE GUYS TO ARM THEMSELVES WITH EXPLOSIVES AND CHARGE THE WEZZARIANS!"
NO!
"BRAINS SAID..."
I KNOW HOW WE CAN PUT THE EXPLOSIVES TO BETTER USE.
"HE DID, TOO. HE GAVE ME A BOX OF THEM AND HAD ME PLANT THEM THROUGHOUT THE RING TOWER."
I JUST CARE ABOUT OUR PEOPLE! I DON'T WANT THEM CHARGING THE WEZZARIANS. THEY'LL BE SLAUGHTERED
YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO START A MUTINY! YOU WANT TO BE A LEADER YOURSELF!!

BAM!
ALRIGHT, PAL! YOU'VE HAD IT!!
I TOLD YOU BEFORE I'M NOT GONNA LET ANYONE STOP ME!!
UH... PARDON ME.
YEAH, JERRY?!! WHAT DO YOU WANT!!?!
POW!
OOOFFF!!!
ALL OF YOU STAND BACK!!
BRANDON! AL! HELP ME!!!
"SOME MOVED FORWARD, SOME HESITATED... UNTIL FINALLY... ALL OF THEM... DID NOTHING..."
I'M SORRY, BART.
TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED.
LET BRAINS HAVE HIS TURN.
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, BART. WE'VE GOT TO STOP THE SLAUGHTERING!
ALRIGHT, BRAINS.
IF YOU CAN STOP OUR PEOPLE FROM GETTING KILLED, IT'S ALL YOURS.
RILETH! HOLD YOUR FIRE! WE'RE SURRENDERING!
TRAITOR!!!
YOU LYING COWARD!!! I'LL KILL YOU!!!

THUMP!
CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT, BART!!!
OOOFFFF!! LET ME GO, JERRY! CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT HE'S DOING?!!
FORGET IT, PAL!!
WE CAN'T GIVE IN NOW!! NOT AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH!!
YOU DON'T KNOW HIM LIKE I DO. HE'S GOT SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE.
I HOPE.
WE HEAR YOU, HUMANS. WE SEE YOUR WHITE FLAG. LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS! SURRENDER THE RING TOWER AND GATHER AT THE ASSEMBLY HALL!
RILETH. LISTEN! OUR SPIRITS ARE BROKEN, BUT WE'RE STILL A PROUD RACE. LET US SURRENDER WITH DIGNITY.
WE'LL GET OUT OF THE RING TOWER WHILE YOU MOVE BACK IN. WE'LL STAY HERE AND SEND A DIPLOMATIC TEAM TO MEET YOU.
LET IT NEVER BE SAID I'M NOT A MERCIFUL MAN, EARTHLING. YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR WISH.
"I HAD A SUSPICION RILETH WASN'T GOING TO KEEP HIS WORD. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I PICTURED HIM SCHEMING SOME DIABOLICAL PLAN."
WE DON'T NEED THEM ANYMORE. GO AHEAD AND KILL THEM.
NOW?
OF COURSE NOT, YOU IDIOT.
WAIT UNTIL WE'RE BACK IN THE RING TOWER AND THEY'RE ALL GATHERED IN ONE PLACE...THEN BLOW THEM AWAY.
"FORTY MINUTES LATER..."
WE'VE ABANDONED THE RING TOWER, JUST AS YOU WANTED.
WHAT ABOUT RILETH AND HIS MEN?
THEY'RE ALL MOVED IN.
GOOD. THEN IT'S OVER AT LAST. NO MORE FIGHTING.

YOU MEAN IT'S OVER FOR YOU, YOU TRAITOR!
THE SLAUGHTERING HAS STOPPED.
YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHING, BRAINS! NOW THAT HE'S GOT US WHERE HE WANTS US HE JUST MIGHT BLAST US TO KINGDOM COME!!!
HAVE YOU GOT THEM IN YOUR SIGHTS?
YES, SIR!
GOOD! THEN LET'S WIPE THEM OUT SO WE CAN MOVE ON TO OTHER MATTERS!!
YOU'RE A DISPICABLE PIG! A LOWDOWN COWARD!!
THE VERY WORST KIND OF MAN!!
READY...
THE VERY SIGHT OF YOU MAKES ME SICK!!
AIM...
YOU'RE A TRAITOR TO THE HUMAN RACE!!
WRONG.
I HAD SOME EXPLOSIVES PLANTED IN THE RING TOWER.
SO?
READY, JERRY?
YEP.
FIRE.
CLICK!

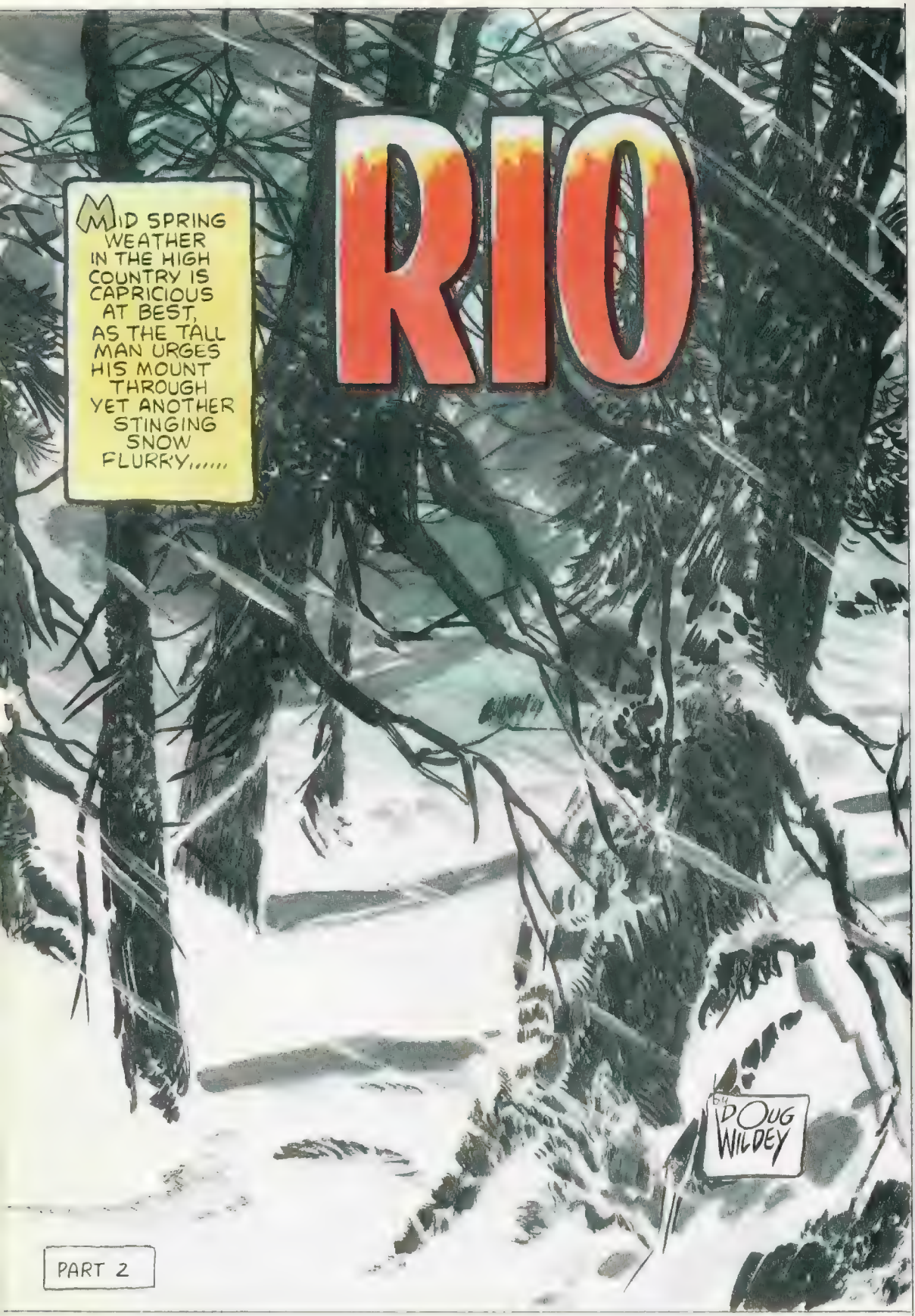

KA-BOOM!
"IT WAS OVER IN SECONDS. EVERYTHING WAS DESTROYED... MACHINERY, COMPUTERS, COMMUNICATION SCANNERS AND, OF COURSE; WEZZARIANS."
"ME AND MY FRIENDS WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO SURVIVED. WITH THOSE SNAZZY UNIFORMS WE HAD, WE DECIDED TO CALL OURSELVES *THE INCREDIBLE SEVEN.*"

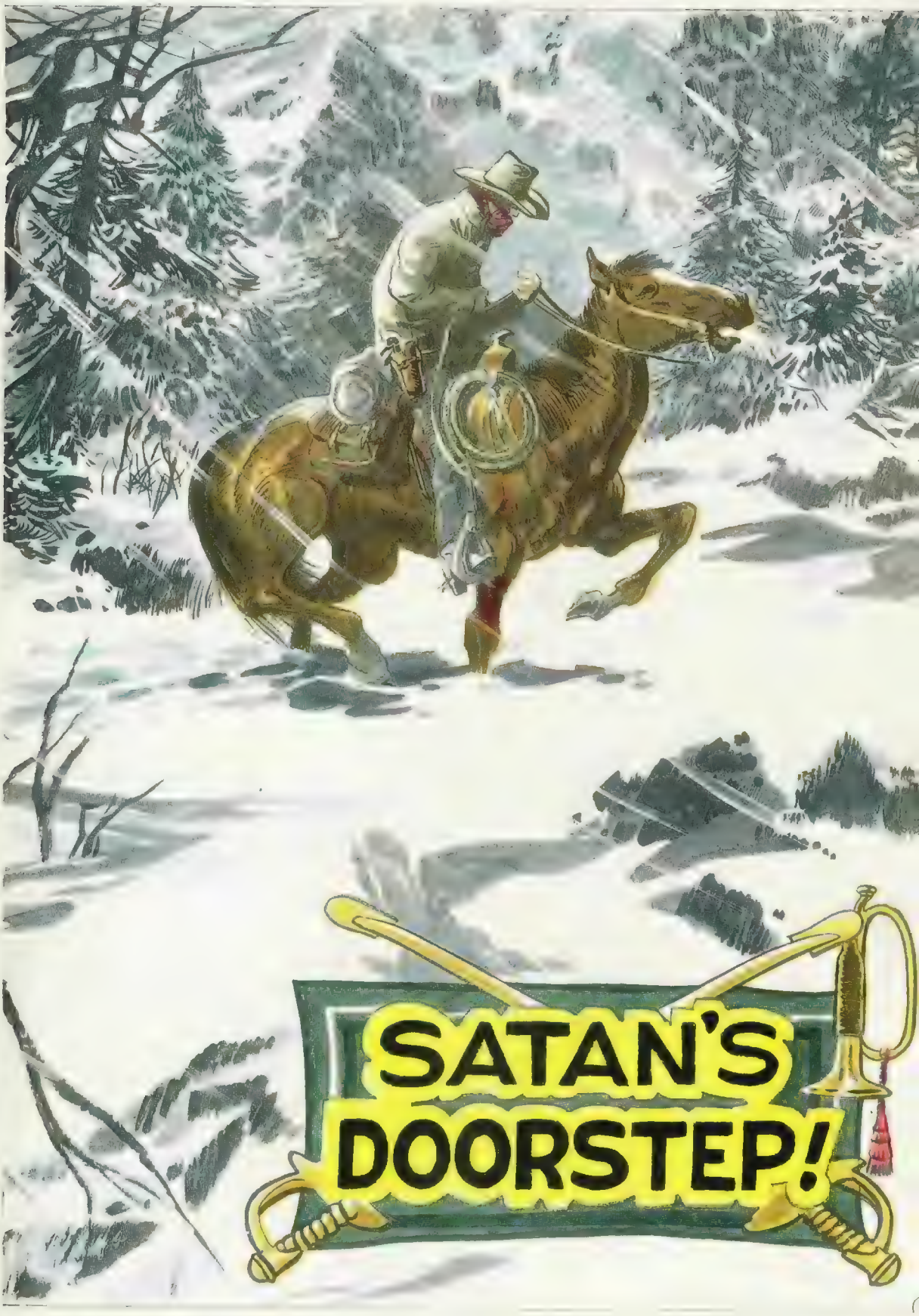
WELL... *THAT'S* THE *WHOLE STORY!*
PRETTY EXCITING, HUH?
YOU *DO* BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO *PUBLISH* IT. ALL I WANT IS SOMEONE WHO'LL *BELIEVE* ME... SOMEONE WHO'LL...
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE EXPLOSION?
I MEAN... YOU *WERE* UNDERGROUND... *WEREN'T* YOU?
HUH?
GOSH! YOU'RE... YOU'RE...
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN *SOME* TYPE OF CAVE IN.
I...I...I...

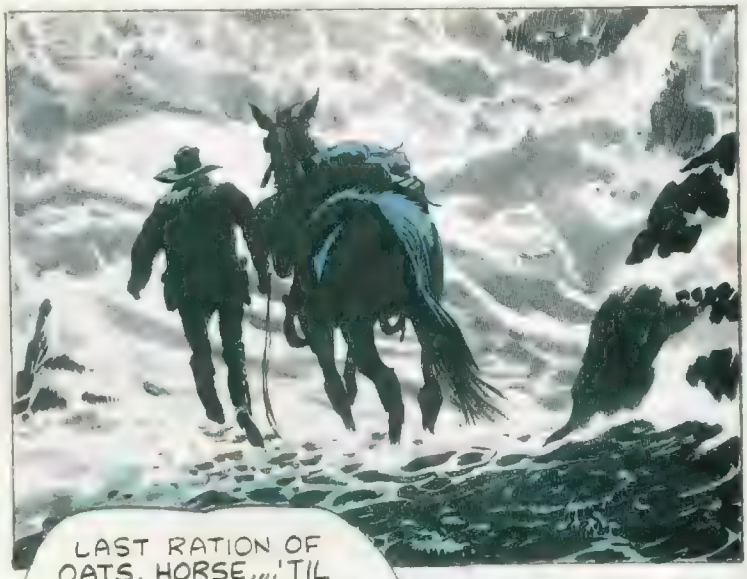
ARE ALL YOUR FRIENDS ALRIGHT? I BET YOU WERE PRETTY SCARED!
Oh...Uh...YOU BET! IT WAS PRETTY HAIRY! YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN THERE!
WHAT DID THE WEZZARIANS LOOK LIKE?
THAT WAS ONE OF THE WEIRD THINGS ABOUT IT! THEY LOOKED JUST LIKE US!
SUDDENLY I UNDERSTOOD IT...
IN ONE BRIEF MOMENT, DICK HAD SHOWN ME WHAT THAT INTANGIBLE ELEMENT WAS...
...WHAT MAKES HIM THE HERO HE IS...
...BUT...I MEAN...DICK DIDN'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT KID'S CRAZY STORY...
...DID HE?
F.I.N.

NEXT ISSUE: APHID MAN RETURNS IN..."THE TRIAL"

Carlos McLlyr
the CALIFORNIO
JOIN IN THE EXCITEMENT AND GRANDEUR OF A NEW HISTORICAL ADVENTURE FANTASY IN THE TRADITION OF PRINCE VALIANT.
CARLOS McLLYR
HIS FATHER WAS AN IRISH ROVER, HIS MOTHER A SEÑORA OF THE PROUD DE LA GUERRA FAMILY. ALONE CARLOS SETS OUT ON A QUEST TO UNDO THE EVIL CREATED BY THE ANCIENT BLACK RUNE OF LLYR AND TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH.
SET AMIDST THE MEXICAN RULE OF OLD LOS ANGELES, CARLOS McLLYR PREMIERES IN A UNIQUE TALE...
"OLD GODS, NEW WORLD"
A SPECIAL 3-PART STORY BY
CHRISTY MARX & PETER LEDGER
BEGINNING IN ECLIPSE
MONTHLY


RIO
MID SPRING WEATHER IN THE HIGH COUNTRY IS CAPRICIOUS AT BEST, AS THE TALL MAN URGES HIS MOUNT THROUGH YET ANOTHER STINGING SNOW FLURRY.....
'64 DOUG WILDEY
PART 2


SATAN'S
DOORSTEP!

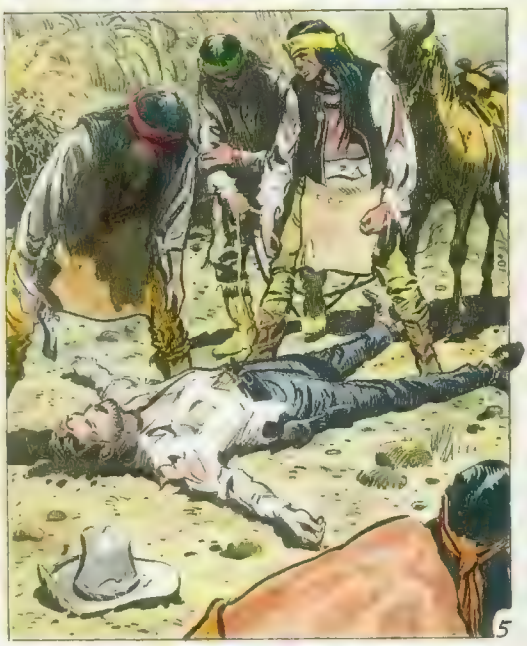


C, MON, C'MON WE'RE ALMOST AT THE CREST!

LAST RATION OF OATS, HORSE... 'TIL WE REACH THE VALLEY FLOOR AND FIND YOU SOME GRAZE!

BUT, CHEER UP. FROM HERE... ... IT'S DOWNHILL ALL THE WAY!

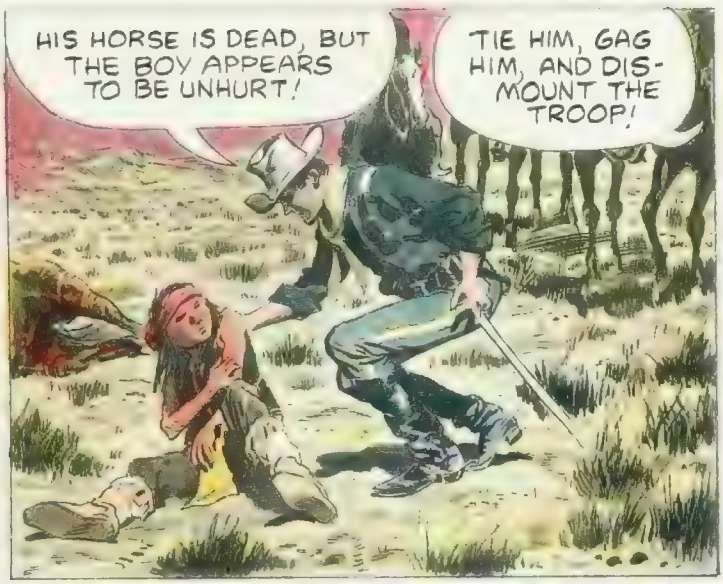
.....BUT DAYS LATER, ON THE SUN-SCORCHED DESERT,.....
COUPLE OF DAYS AGO, I WAS WHINING ABOUT THE COLD...
...NOW ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS A LONG DRINK OF WATER!
WHOA UP, HORSE....
WHAT'S SPOOKING YOU?



LATER, MILES TO THE SOUTH...
APACHES! HALF MILE AHEAD, SIR! SMALL GROUP HEADED EAST!
SPLENDID! WE WILL ENGAGE THE RED DEVILS POSTEHASTE!
MR. PIERCE, FORM THE TROOP IN COLUMNS OF FOURS!
SIR, OUR MOUNTS ARE NOT REALLY IN SHAPE FOR OPEN COUNTRY PURSUIT....WE STILL HAVE THREE DAYS RIDE BACK TO THE FORT.....
....AND WITH ALMOST NO WATER LEFT, WE...
I'M IN COMMAND HERE, MR. PIERCE! PREPARE THE TROOP! WE ATTACK... ... NOW!
WOULD BONAPARTE ALLOW AN OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK HIS ENEMY SLIP AWAY UNDER ANY CONDITIONS? I THINK NOT, LIEUTENANT! NO INDEED!
AT THE GALLOP..... YOHOOHH!

COLONEL! THEY APPEAR TO BE **WOMEN**, SIR,.... WOMEN AND CHILDREN!
THERE ARE ONLY **TWO** BRAVES IN THE GROUP!
THEY ARE **HOSTILES**, ARE THEY NOT? THEY ARE THE **ENEMY**, ARE THEY NOT?
THE BLUECOATS ATTACK! BUT ALREADY THEIR PONIES FALTER!
WE MUST MOVE THE WOMEN AND YOUNG ONES TO SAFETY. RIDE QUICKLY.... WE CAN OUTDISTANCE THEM!

THIS CURSED HORSE IS FLAGGING!
FACE IT, SIR, WE CAN'T CATCH THEM! OUR MOUNTS ARE DONE IN!
HEATHEN SCUM!
ONE OF THEM DID'NT GET AWAY!


HIS HORSE IS DEAD, BUT THE BOY APPEARS TO BE UNHURT!
TIE HIM, GAG HIM, AND DISMOUNT THE TROOP!

WE'LL BIVOUAK HERE, MR. PIERCE. SET UP PICKET LINES AND POST GUARDS!

AH, THE SUPPLY WAGON HAS CAUGHT UP WITH US!
HAVE THE MEN REFILL THEIR CANTEENS, AND....

SIR, WHATEVER LITTLE WATER WE HAVE LEFT **MUST** BE RATIONED TO THE **HORSES**!
USA

AFTER THE HORSES ARE WATERED AND RESTED FOR TEN HOURS, WE **MIGHT** MAKE IT BACK TO THE FORT!

THAT NIGHT...
PIERCE, THIS MAP INDICATES A WATER SUPPLY HERE.... ONLY HALF A DAY'S RIDE FROM WHERE WE ARE NOW!
A STAGE-COACH RELAY STATION IN A PLACE CALLED POZOS MELLIZOS!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS COUNTRY, LIEUTENANT! YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THIS POZOS MELLIZOS?
THAT RELAY STATION WAS ABANDONED TWO YEARS AGO, SIR. IT LIES AT THE END OF A STEEP PASS WHICH INDIANS AND OUTLAWS USED TO AMBUSH COACHES TRAVELLING THROUGH IT. A GORGE KNOWN AS SATAN'S DOORSTEP!
THE STAGE LINE LOST A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY AND LIVES MAINTAINING A STATION WHICH, IN EFFECT, WAS A TRAP!
A TRAP FOR A STAGE-LINE, PERHAPS, BUT FOR THE U.S. ARMY, WE....
COLONEL ELGIN, SIR!
FOUR APACHES OUT THERE, SIR. THEY WANT TO PARLEY. THEY HAVE A CAPTIVE... .... A WHITE MAN!
COME ALONG, PIERCE!

YOU! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT? WHAT DO THESE HEATHEN WANT TO DISCUSS? AND WHO ARE YOU?
NAME'S RIO. SEEMS YOU HAVE AN APACHE BOY PRISONER. THEY WANT TO EXCHANGE HIM FOR ME!
FOUR REDSKINS PRESUME TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE UNITED STATES ARMY? HAH!
WAIT A MINUTE, SIR, WE....
OH, MY G.....
COLONEL ELGIN, I THINK YOU JUST BROUGHT ON A FULL SCALE WAR, SIR!
AMEN, BROTHER!
BAH! YOU'RE AN OLD WOMAN, PIERCE! FETCH THE CIVILIAN BACK TO CAMP!

LATER...
WE CAN OFFER YOU NEITHER FOOD NOR WATER, MR. RIO. THIS TROOP IS BADLY DEPLETED AT THE MOMENT. WHERE WERE YOU BOUND?
TRACKING A MAN. NAME OF GRADY PARRISH. FIGURE HE'S IN MEXICO BY NOW.
MR. PIERCE!
YES, SIR!
A FORCED MARCH TONIGHT, ALTERNATELY WALKING AND RIDING, SHOULD BRING US TO POZOS MELLIZOS IN SIX HOURS!
ASSEMBLE THE TROOP... ...WE MOVE OUT IN TEN MINUTES!
A MAN OF INSTANT DECISION, YOUR COLONEL.
AT LEAST WE WON'T BE HERE WHEN THAT REMAINING BRAVE BRINGS HIS MAIN BUNCH BACK FOR OUR BLOOD!

AT DAWN...
WELL, MR. PIERCE... WE'VE COME THROUGH YOUR SATAN'S DOORSTEP PASS'....AND NARY AN INDIAN!
A FEW MINUTES MORE AND WE'LL ALL BE DRINKING OUR FILL!
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, COLONEL. THIS REGION IS AN APACHE STRONGHOLD!
TROOP.... HAALLT!
CORPORAL, GO REMOVE THE COVER FROM THAT WELL AND DRAW A BUCKET OF WATER!
YES, SIR!
AMBUSH!
COVER! TAKE COVER!

THEY HAVE PLENTY OF FIREPOWER!
COMING FROM UP ON THAT WEST RIDGE!
NOBODY'S GOING TO DRAW ANY WATER FROM THAT WELL IN DAYLIGHT!
WE'VE GOT A LONG, THIRSTY DAY AHEAD OF US!
MINUTES LATER....
I'LL USE THIS ROOM AS MY BILLET, MR. PIERCE. PICKET THE HORSES AND SUPPLY WAGON BEHIND THE BUILDINGS, ...OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE!
YES, SIR. AND I'LL INSTRUCT THE MEN TO TRY TO REST UNTIL NIGHTFALL, WHEN WE CAN GET TO THE WATER

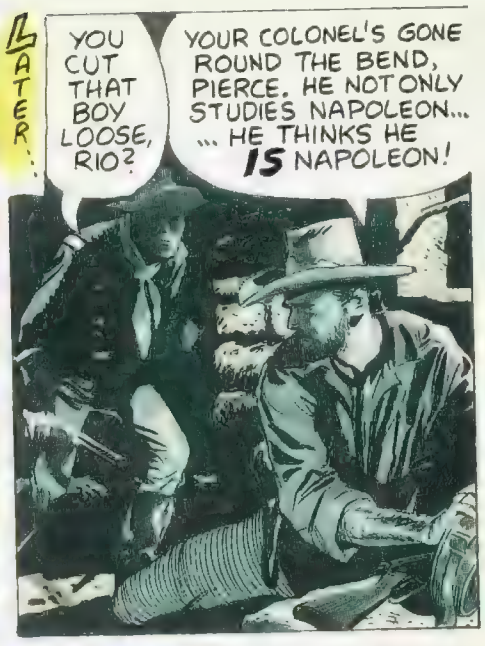
THE SEARING SUN IS HIGH IN THE SKY NOW. ALREADY BUZZARDS WHEEL OVER THE BAKING CANYON, SUMMONED BY PRESENT DEATH AND THE PROMISE OF MORE TO COME.....
...THINK... WE CAN... ...HOLD OUT... 'TIL DARK, DAVIS?
DUNNO.... MY TONGUE'S GETTIN' SWOLE.... GOTTA ... HAVE WATER.... SOON... OR....
CAN'T SEE ANY MOVEMENT UP THERE!
IT'S A SEIGE, PIERCE. THEY'VE GOT US LIKE FLIES IN A BOTTLE!
HEY! RIO! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
MIGHT AS WELL GET ME A SHIRT AND SIDEARM....
THIS FELLA CAN'T USE 'EM ANY-MORE!
MR. RIO, THE COLONEL WANTS TO SEE YOU!

YOU KNOW THIS COUNTRY, RIO? THE PASS WE CAME THROUGH IS NO DOUBT SEALED OFF BY THE HOSTILES?
NO DOUBT AT ALL, COLONEL. THEY HAVE US LOCKED UP TIGHT!
WE, HOWEVER, HOLD THE WATER! THEY MUST BE THIRSTY TOO!
UH, COLONEL ... THIS PLACE IS CALLED POZOS MELLIZOS! IN ENGLISH... 'TWIN WELLS.' THERE'S ANOTHER WATER WELL UP ON THAT RIDGE!
THOSE APACHES HAVE PLENTY OF FOOD AND WATER. THEY CAN KEEP US BOTTLED UP HERE FOREVER, IF THEY'RE SO INCLINED!
THEY... THEY HAVE THEIR OWN SOURCE OF WATER?
I WON'T HAVE IT! A PACK OF IGNORANT SAVAGES SIMPLY CANNOT RENDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY IMPOTENT!
THEY'LL WAIT UP THERE 'TIL WE'RE ALL DEAD OF BULLETS OR STARVATION, COLONEL!
TACTICS! TACTICS! I MUST MAKE THEM SHOW THEMSELVES! MAKE THEM COME TO US!
BONAPARTE, THE ULTIMATE TACTICIAN, THE WORLD'S GREATEST MILITARY GENIUS, WOULD... WOULD....

....ANGER THEM... FORCE THEM TO DISCARD CAUTION! A BONAPARTE TACTIC!
WAY I SEE IT, THE SPRUNG TRAP, THIS SEIGE, IS THE WORK OF THE SOUTHWEST'S OWN TACTICAL GENIUS, COLONEL, ...
....HIS NAME IS GERONIMO!
THE BOY CAPTIVE! I'LL HANG THE YOUNG DEVIL TONIGHT! AND AT DAWN, WHEN YOUR GERONIMO SEES HIM SWINGING,...THAT WILL FLUSH HIM OUT OF CONCEALMENT!
HANG THE B.....
HE'LL CHARGE DOWN HERE INTO OUR GUNS!
UH, HUH .....

....WATER....
YOUNGSTER, I HOPE YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH STRENGTH LEFT TO GET OUT THAT WINDOW AND KEEP RUNNING!
NIGHT HAS FALLEN, AND UNDER COVER OF MERCIFUL DARKNESS, THE PARCHED MEN OF C TROOP AT LAST SLAKE THEIR THIRST....
GONE? THE PRISONER IS GONE? HOW?
I....I DON'T KNOW, SIR. HE'S NOWHERE TO BE FOUND!
RIO! THE CIVILIAN! BRING HIM TO ME!
WHILE AT THIS MOMENT.....
USA

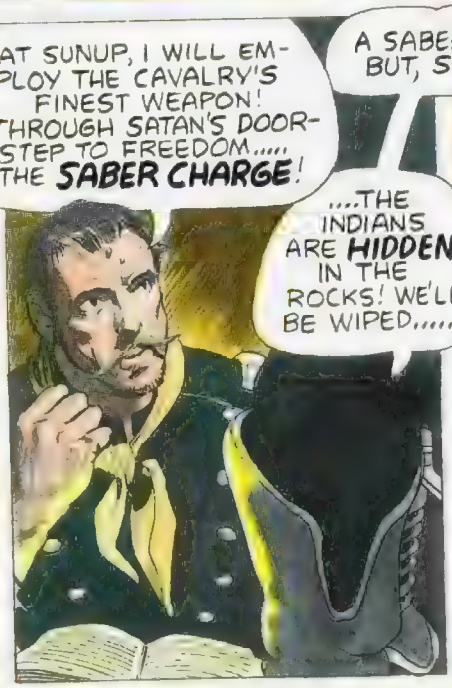
WHILE WE'RE BUSY DRINKIN' WATER AN' BURYIN' OUR DEAD....
...THERE GOES ALL OUR CARTRIDGES!


LATER...
YOU CUT THAT BOY LOOSE, RIO?
YOUR COLONEL'S GONE ROUND THE BEND, PIERCE. HE NOT ONLY STUDIES NAPOLEON... ... HE THINKS HE IS NAPOLEON!

HIDE OUT THERE, SOMEPLACE, RIO! MAYBE IF HE CALMS DOWN AND STARTS THINKING CLEARLY....
MR. PIERCE!

SIR, THE CIVILIAN, MR. RIO, IS NO LONGER WITH US!
OUT THERE AMONG THE SAVAGES? HE'S PROBABLY DEAD BY NOW!

PIERCE, I'M CONVINCED THAT ONE BOLD MOVE WILL GET US OUT OF THIS TRAP! A MOVE BONAPARTE WOULD APPLAUD!
UH... A BOLD MOVE, SIR?


AT SUNUP, I WILL EMPLOY THE CAVALRY'S FINEST WEAPON! THROUGH SATAN'S DOORSTEP TO FREEDOM..... THE SABER CHARGE!
....THE INDIANS ARE HIDDEN IN THE ROCKS! WE'LL BE WIPED.....

A SABER CH.... BUT, SIR,...
....VERY WELL, SIR, I WILL SO INFORM THE TROOP.

IN THE HALF-LIGHT OF DAWN, FROM CONCEALMENT, THE TALL MAN WATCHES THE REMAINING MEN OF TROOP C MOUNT AND DRAW SABERS.

BUGLER! SOUND THE CHARGE!

IN DISBELIEF HE WATCHES THE SWEEP TOWARD THE MOUTH OF THE SILENT PASS...

THEN, AS SATAN'S DOOR-STEP REVER-BERATES WITH THE CRASH OF MANY GUNS, HE CAN WATCH NO LONGER.

HOURS LATER...

YOU'RE THE LAST MAN LEFT, RIO,....

...AND NOW THEY'RE COMING FOR YOU! HEAR THOSE HOOFBEATS?

WHAT IN....?

M... MY HORSE... RIFLE... BEDROLL...

WEARILY, BUT GRATEFULLY, THE TALL MAN MOUNTS AND RIDES UNMOLESTED FROM THE DEATH TRAP.

A DEBT HAS BEEN PAID.

SOUTH WE GO, HORSE,... SOUTH TO MEXICO!

END

Cap'n Quick & a Foozle
We're expanding
coming your way soon
(* in their own 32 page book)

"Next month we promise to introduce you to everyone in the office!" said Dean last month . . . just before leaving for New York City on a business trip.

Well.

I guess that means i get to write this Surf City, even though i'm neither Jan, Dean nor The Beach Boys.

At least i'm in the office, which is more than i can say for **some** folks!

Actually, Dean is in an office . . . the New York office of Eclipse Comics, more properly known as Surf City East. New York is where the Business and Circulation departments of this cross-country company are located. Head business-person is Jan Mullaney. Readers, meet Jan . . . Jan, say hello to the readers. "Hi, folks!"

Gee, this is fun! I can make 'em say any darn thing i want 'em to!

Jan's the man who dickers with the distributors, deals with the dealers, raps with the retailers, and most importantly, Signs the Checks. A very important guy in the scheme of things. Jan's also a very talented musician and a professional one at that. When he's not Eclipsing, Jan is pursuing his second career, playing keyboards, producing records and writing songs. It's a busy life for Jan Mullaney.

Assisting Jan is Madelyn Feinberg. The New York office could hardly function without Madelyn. She answers the phone, handles subscriptions and takes care of the business-oriented mail. She also makes sure Jan-Boy doesn't forget to eat or sleep, what with his 48-hour-a-day schedule.

If Eclipse East takes care of business, i think i can safely say that Eclipse West has all the fun. Dean and i run the editorial office here in California. We work with the writers, artists, letterers and colourists to actually produce all the stuff Jan signs checks for and you folks buy.

The editorial office, however, wouldn't be what it is without the assistance of some very fine helpers.

James Shannon, Elgin Lessly and Alice Stockham are the unsung heroes of the Eclipse production department. They are responsible for all of those tiny little details nobody thinks about when they look at a beautifully drawn and printed comic book. Jimmy, Les and Alice handle chores like pasting up the lettercolumns and house ads, running the photocopy machine, getting all stats and typesetting together, checking art for errors (we can't leave the zipper tabs off of Rainbow's boots or the buckles off of Ms. Tree's trenchcoat!), and making sure that every page sent to the engravers is marked with the proper series title and page number. They also sweep the floors, open the mail, forward your letters of comment to the proper writers and artists, and, if we're lucky, make coffee for Dean and me. There is no more thankless task in the comic book industry than doing "production work." Alice, Les and Jimmy don't even ask for thanks. (They do want their paychecks every Friday, but that's a small price to pay for silent, uncomplaining service . . . and occasionally fresh coffee.)

Dean is, as most of you know, the other half of Jan-and-. He's Editor-in-Chief of this entire three-ring circus and that means everything — from the decision (with Jan) of what to publish and when to publish it, right on down to proof-reading half the books — rests on his furry little head. Dino doesn't sleep much. He's what you'd call a workaholic. As if editorial conferences and general overseeing were not enough, Dean also writes "The Scythe," which appears monthly in Ms. Tree.

Oh yes . . . and he has one other very important function here at Eclipse. Dino, bless his heart, is the self-appointed Guardian of the Fabulous Eclipse Record Collection. No muzak for us! This may be the only comic book company where the happy workers can get behind anything from Hoagy Carmichael's 1927 recording of **Star Dust** to Carl Perkins' 1955 out-takes of **Blue Suede Shoes**, with stops along the way for Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys, Jimi Hendrix, or the latest live George Shearing-Mel Torme disc.

Yes, there are Editors-in-Chief who are taller than Dean, Editors-in-Chief who are older than Dean, and Editors-in-Chief who are bigger than Dean around the middle . . . but no where in comics will you find an Editor-in-Chief with a larger record collection than Dean's — and nowhere will you find one who keeps the stereo going all day long and far into the night for the benefit of his employees!

That leaves yours truly to explain what the heck i'm doing here. Yes . . . well, i edit a few books myself (keep your eyes ready for **Aztec Ace**), do more than a little proof-reading, and i am also the person who runs the Colouring Department. I check all the colour work, oversee the separations made by the engravers, and hold my breath when the jobs go to press for fear something will go wrong. It rarely does, but i have a superstitious feeling that unless at least one person is worried, something really major will happen.

Oh yes, and if i'm left to manage the office in the absence of Our Fearless Leader, i get to do things like writing this here column. I also feed the Guinea Pig.

No lie. Eclipse Comics has an official Guinea Pig. Her name is Barbie Sue. She is an Abyssinian Agouti, and she is very sweet and unpretentious. What else can one say about her? She goes "Vreeep Vreeep" when she's hungry. She's like, a guinea pig, ya know?

And that, friends, is the low-down on Who's Who at Eclipse Comics. You may not know any more about us than you did before you began reading this, but if you think you do, you can thank — or blame — yours truly,

catherine yronwode
editor (and cowgirl emeritus)

FREE COLOR CHART OFFER!! We've given away thousands already, but it's still not too late for YOU to get your own FREE Eclipse Comics Color Chart! This nifty four-pager, with art by Marshall Rogers, will let you in on one of the biggest secrets behind the comics, namely, how we can take four colours of ink and give you 124 different, brilliant hues! To get your FREE chart, just tell us your name, age and the name of the store where you bought this magazine, and enclose a SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE (a large one if you want it mailed flat; it's the size of a regular comic book, remember). Mail your request to ECLIPSE COMICS, Box 199, Guerneville, Calif. 95446.

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